



NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program

Fiscal Year 2014 Continuation Contract Application and Program Guidance

August 2013

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Health Resources and Services Administration
Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service
Division of Nursing and Public Health
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 8-72
Rockville, Maryland 20857

For Questions, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910), Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) 8:00am to 8:00 pm EST, or email GetHelp@hrsa.gov.

Access to Program Portal: <https://programportal.hrsa.gov>

Authority: Section 846(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 297(n)(a)), as amended. Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidances may also be applicable to your participation in the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program.

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Privacy Act Notification Statement

General

This information is provided pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), as amended, for individuals supplying information for inclusion in a system of records.

Statutory Authority

Section 846(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 297(n)(a)), as amended.

Purposes and Uses

The purpose of the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program (NURSE Corps LRP) is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional Registered Nurses (RNs), including advanced practice registered nurses, dedicated to working in eligible health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses or working as nurse faculty in accredited eligible schools of nursing, by decreasing the economic barriers associated with pursuing careers at such critical shortage facilities or in academic nursing. The information applicants provide will be used to evaluate their eligibility for participating in NURSE Corps LRP. In addition, information from other sources will be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports).

An individual's contract, application, required supplemental forms, supporting documentation, correspondences and related data are maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor NURSE Corps LRP-related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses (see <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/privacyact/09150037.html>).

Effects of Nondisclosure

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if not submitted, an application will be considered incomplete and therefore will not be considered for an award under this announcement.

Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The current OMB control number for information collected through this application process is 0915-0140 and expires on 04/30/2014. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 6 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10-33, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

Discrimination Prohibited

In accordance with applicable Federal laws and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, the Department does not discriminate on the basis of any non-merit factor, including race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability (physical or mental), age, status as a parent, or genetic information.

Program Overview

All requirements in this Guidance apply to current participants in the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program who are requesting a 1-year extension of their current service.

INTRODUCTION

What is the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program (NURSE Corps LRP)?

The United States continues to experience a nursing shortage that is expected to increase given the aging demographic of the U.S. population and a growing need for health care. Further compounding this problem, U.S. schools of nursing cannot adequately expand enrollment levels due to a shortage of nurse faculty. NURSE Corps LRP assists in addressing these issues.

NURSE Corps LRP, *formerly known as the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program (NELRP)*, is administered by the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service (BCRS) in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The purpose of NURSE Corps LRP is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional registered nurses (RNs), including advanced practice registered nurses (i.e., nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetist, certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists), dedicated to working in health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses, defined as a Critical Shortage Facility (CSF), or working as nurse faculty at an eligible accredited school of nursing, by decreasing the financial barriers associated with pursuing a nursing profession. The program offers these RNs substantial financial assistance to repay a portion of their qualifying educational loans in exchange for full-time service at either a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses or at an eligible accredited school of nursing in the case of nurse faculty.

What is a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract?

The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract offers NURSE Corps LRP participants who have completed their initial two-year contract an opportunity for a third optional year of service in exchange for an additional 25 percent of their original qualifying educational loan balance.

When applying for a Continuation Contract participants must continue to provide service in the same capacity agreed upon in their initial two-year contract. For example, participants who are serving their initial two-year contract as an RN at a CSF cannot seek a continuation contract to serve as an advanced practice RN or as nurse faculty at an eligible accredited school of nursing. Similarly, participants who are serving under their initial two-year contract as nurse faculty at an eligible accredited school of nursing cannot seek a continuation contract to serve as an RN or advanced practice RN at a CSF.

A participant who enters into a one-year continuation contract but fails to begin or complete his/her obligation is liable to repay all the NURSE Corps LRP payments received for the third year of service (including amounts withheld for Federal taxes), plus interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of the participant's breach. Breach of contract will permanently disqualify the individual from receiving future awards under the NURSE Corps LRP and some other Federal programs.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS and APPLICATION PROCESS

Participants will be notified by NURSE Corps LRP via email if they are eligible to apply for a one-year continuation. Participants deemed eligible for a continuation contract will have access to the application link under the “I Need To...” section of the Program Portal.

What are the eligibility requirements for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract?

To be eligible for a continuation contract, all of the following conditions must be met:

- (1) A participant must be serving full-time at the same Critical Shortage Facility (CSF) or at the same accredited school of nursing, as approved to serve under his or her initial 2-year contract, and plan to continue serving there under the continuation contract;

If the participant’s site is no longer eligible, a continuation contract will not be awarded. If a participant wants to continue in NURSE Corps LRP, he or she must request and receive prior approval to transfer to another eligible facility or accredited school of nursing prior to submitting his/her request for a continuation contract. Please note that moving expenses will not be paid.

- (2) A participant must have a current full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license as an RN and retain it during the one-year service obligation;
- (3) The NURSE Corps LRP payments received after federal tax withholding under the NURSE Corps LRP two-year contract must have been applied to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances, as indicated on the Payment Authorization Worksheet (PAW) that participants received with their award notice. A participant’s loan balances will be verified and a payment history from his or her lender(s)/holder(s) will be required. Failure to apply all NURSE Corps LRP payments to reduce the original qualifying nursing education loan balances will result in the denial of a request for a continuation contract;
- (4) A participant must not have an existing service obligation other than NURSE Corps LRP, including any obligations for state-sponsored loan repayment programs (there is an exception for members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard);
- (5) A participant must continue to meet all other program eligibility criteria, must be in full compliance with his or her existing NURSE Corps LRP service obligation, and must be planning to work for the duration of the continuation contract at the same approved CSF or accredited school of nursing; and
- (6) A participant must not have defaulted on any Federal payment obligations (e.g., Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, FHA Loans, Federal income tax liabilities, etc.) or non-Federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments, mortgage payments, etc.).

The continuation contract will not be effective until it has been signed by the participant and the Secretary's designee, until the participant has completed service under the initial two-year contract, and unless all NURSE Corps LRP payments received under the initial contract have been applied to reduce the qualifying educational loan balances, prior to the completion of service under that contract. The continuation contract service period must begin immediately following the completion of the initial service commitment. If, after submitting an application and signing the continuation contract, an applicant is unable to commence service under the contract, he/she must submit a request to NURSE Corps LRP via the Program Portal to withdraw his or her application for a continuation award. All requests for contract cancellation must be made before the contract is countersigned by the Secretary's designee.

Does my site qualify for the NURSE Corps LRP?

An FY 2014 NURSE Corps LRP continuation contract participant is required to continue work at a Critical Shortage Facility, or an eligible accredited school of nursing in the case of nurse faculty participants, in the same or higher Tier as that within which they were initially awarded. The facility or accredited school of nursing must be a public or private nonprofit entity.

The CSF must be located in, designated as, or serving a primary medical care or mental health health professional shortage area (HPSA).

Critical Shortage Facilities include:

- a. **Critical Access Hospital (CAH).** A facility that is (a) located in a State that has established with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) a Medicare rural hospital flexibility program; (b) designated by the State as a CAH; (c) certified by the CMS as a CAH; and (d) in compliance with all applicable CAH conditions of participation. For more information, please visit: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Certificationandcompliance/04_CAHs.asp.
- b. **Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH).** A hospital that has a disproportionately large share of low-income patients and receives an augmented payment from the State under Medicaid or a payment adjustment from Medicare. Hospital-based outpatient services are included under this definition. For more information, please visit: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/AcuteInpatientPPS/05_dsh.asp#TopOfPage.
- c. **Public Hospital.** Any hospital that is owned by a government (Federal, State, or Local) and receives government funding and is primarily engaged in providing, by or under the supervision of physicians, to inpatients: (a) diagnostic and therapeutic services for medical diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured, disabled, or sick persons; or (b) rehabilitation of injured, disabled, or sick persons. Hospital-based outpatient services are included under this definition.
- d. **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).** FQHCs include: (1) nonprofit entities that receive a grant, or funding from a grant, under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act to provide primary health services and other related services to a population that is medically underserved; (2) FQHC "Look-Alikes" which are nonprofit entities that are certified by the Secretary of HHS as meeting the requirements for receiving a grant under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act but are not grantees; and (3) outpatient health programs or facilities operated by a tribe or tribal organization under the Indian Self-Determination Act or by an urban Indian organization receiving funds under Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. FQHCs include Community Health Centers, Migrant Health Centers, Health Care for the

Homeless Health Centers and Public Housing Primary Care Health Centers. For more information, please visit: <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

- e. **Indian Health Service Health Center.** A health care facility (whether operated directly by the Indian Health Service or by a tribe or tribal organization, contractor or grantee under the Indian Self-Determination Act, as described in 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 136, Subparts C and H, or by an urban Indian organization receiving funds under Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act) that is physically separated from a hospital, and which provides clinical treatment services on an outpatient basis to persons of Indian or Alaskan Native descent as described in 42 CFR Section 136.12. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ihs.gov>.
- f. **Native Hawaiian Health Center.** An entity: (a) which is organized under the laws of the State of Hawaii; (b) which provides or arranges for health care services through practitioners licensed by the State of Hawaii, where licensure requirements are applicable; (c) which is a public or nonprofit private entity; and (d) in which Native Hawaiian health practitioners significantly participate in the planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation of health services. For more information, please see the Native Hawaiian Health Care Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-579), as amended by Public Law 102-396, and <http://healthfinder.gov/orgs/HR3600.htm>.
- g. **Rural Health Clinic.** An entity that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has certified as a rural health clinic under section 1861(aa)(2) of the Social Security Act. A rural health clinic provides outpatient services to a non-urban area with an insufficient number of health care practitioners. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/rural.asp>.
- h. **Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF).** An institution (or a distinct part of an institution), certified under section 1819(a) of the Social Security Act, that is primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing care and related services to residents requiring medical, rehabilitation, or nursing care and is not primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/snf.asp>.
- i. **State or Local Public Health or Human Services Department.** The State, county, parish, or district entity in a State that is responsible for providing population-focused health services which include health promotion, disease prevention, and intervention services provided in clinics or other health care facilities that are operated by the Department.
- j. **Ambulatory Surgical Center.** An entity in a State that provides surgical services to individuals on an outpatient basis and is not owned or operated by a hospital.
- k. **Home Health Agency.** An agency or organization, certified under section 1861(o) of the Social Security Act that is primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing care and other therapeutic services. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/hha.asp>.
- l. **Hospice Program.** An agency or organization, certified under section 1861(dd)(2) of the Social Security Act, that provides 24-hour care and treatment services (as needed) to terminally ill individuals and bereavement counseling for their immediate family members. This care is provided in individuals' homes, on an outpatient basis, and on a short-term inpatient basis, directly or under arrangements made by the agency or organization.
- m. **Non-Disproportionate Share Hospital.** An institution in a State that is primarily engaged in providing care, by or under the supervision of physicians, to inpatients: (a) diagnostic and therapeutic services for medical diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured, disabled, or sick

persons, or(b) rehabilitation of injured, disabled, or sick persons. Hospital-based outpatient services are included under this definition.

- n. **Nursing Home.** An institution (or a distinct part of an institution), certified under section 1919(a) of the Social Security Act, that is primarily engaged in providing, on a regular basis, health related care and service to individuals who because of their mental or physical condition require care and service (above the level of room and board) that can be made available to them only through institutional facilities, and is not primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases. For more information, please visit:
<http://www.medicare.gov/Nursing/Overview.asp>.

Ineligible facilities include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Free-standing clinics that do not qualify as a facility above;
- (2) Renal dialysis centers;
- (3) Private practice offices;
- (4) Assisted living facilities;
- (5) Clinics in prisons and correctional facilities; and
- (6) Private for-profit facilities.

What should I expect if I am selected to receive a continuation contract?

If the participant's continuation contract application is approved, the participant will be notified by NURSE Corps LRP through the Program Portal. The NURSE Corps LRP frequently corresponds with applicants by email and the Program Portal. Please check email during the continuation contract process for correspondence from NURSE Corps LRP and make certain to disable SPAM blockers (or check your SPAM folder). Please make sure contact information is current in the Program Portal.

If a participant is selected for a NURSE Corps LRP continuation contract, the individual's contract becomes effective once it is signed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or his/her designee and the participant. Note that the service start date is not set and service credit does not accrue until the participant has completed the initial two-year service commitment under the initial NURSE Corps LRP contract, including any additional time required due to excessive absences. If the participant's absences exceed the amount allowable during the initial two-year service commitment (see "May I be absent from my site and receive service credit?"), the service end date under the initial contract will be extended and the participant's scheduled payments may be adjusted accordingly.

Award payments are made monthly over 12 months through an electronic funds transfer to the participant's checking or savings account identified on the banking information submitted by the participant. Be sure to check and update your banking information in the Program Portal. The first direct deposit is made approximately 30 days after the service start date.

Important Requirements:

- (1) Participants must use the NURSE Corps LRP payments to pay the lenders or holders of their qualifying educational loans, as indicated on the Payment Authorization Worksheet that will be provided to participants with their award notice. Periodically, NURSE Corps LRP will contact a participant's lenders or holders to verify that award payments have been applied to NURSE Corps LRP approved loans.

- (2) Participants can update the following NURSE Corps program information, via the Program Portal; name, mailing address, email address, and financial institution (bank) information. Participants must also notify NURSE Corps LRP of any changes to their service site and/or employment status by submitting a transfer request. In the case of a name change, participants must also submit legal documentation, such as a copy of a marriage certificate.
- (3) If for any reason a participant does not receive a scheduled payment, the participant should contact the NURSE Corps LRP as soon as possible through the Program Portal, via Customer Service 1-800-221-9393, or email GetHelp@hrsa.gov. Please be advised that if the NURSE Corps LRP has any questions concerning a participant's eligibility for continuing payments, NURSE Corps LRP will delay payments pending clarification of the participant's eligibility status.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

What are the service requirements?

- (1) For Nurse Faculty serving at an eligible accredited school of nursing: Nurse faculty must provide full-time service as a nurse faculty member at the accredited school of nursing for a period of one year beginning on the day following completion of service under your initial contract. Full-time service is working full-time (as defined by the employer) as a nurse faculty member for a minimum of 9 months per service year. No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) of the participant's scheduled work period (9 to 12 months) per service year may be spent away from the accredited school of nursing for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, maternity/paternity/adoption, or for any other reason. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant's NURSE Corps LRP service obligation end date (see Suspension & Waiver, page 11).

Nurse faculty are encouraged to promote health care careers in underserved areas. This can be done via presentations to students, student organizations or other community based organizations to provide information about nursing and/or other health care professions.

- (2) For RNs, including advanced practice registered nurses such as NPs, who serve at a CSF: RNs must provide full-time service, defined as working as an RN for at least 32 hours per week per service year at the CSF, for one year beginning the day following completion of service under your initial contract. No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year may be spent away from the CSF for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, maternity/paternity/adoption, or for any other reason. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant's NURSE Corps LRP service obligation end date (see Suspension & Waiver, page 11).

For all NURSE Corps LRP participants, the following rules apply:

- (1) Participants must retain a current full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license as an RN during the one-year service obligation to continue to receive service credit under the NURSE Corps LRP;
- (2) If an applicant fails to commence full-time service on the effective date of the contract at the Critical Shortage Facility or accredited school of nursing identified in the application, he/she may be placed in default.

Will I earn a salary during my service obligation?

NURSE Corps LRP participants will receive salary and benefits from the employing Critical Shortage Facility, professional group, or accredited school of nursing. Employment compensation packages may be negotiated between the nurse and the employer. The facility, professional group, or accredited school of nursing cannot guarantee a NURSE Corps LRP award. Therefore, the NURSE Corps LRP loan repayments should not be a part of any salary negotiations between the nurse and the employer.

May I be absent from my site and receive service credit?

No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year may be spent away from the facility or accredited school of nursing for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, maternity/paternity/adoption, or any other reason. NURSE Corps LRP-approved absences totaling greater than 7 weeks (35 workdays) in a service year require an extension of the contract end date.

In-Service Verification (ISV)

All NURSE Corps LRP participants who are serving at a CSF or accredited school of nursing must verify their service through the Program Portal. In this process, participants must obtain, from an appropriate official at the CSF or accredited school of nursing, certification of the participant's compliance with the full-time service (defined as working at the assigned site for at least 32 hours per week) under the NURSE Corps LRP. The service verification process will also record the timehours spent away from the CSF or accredited school of nursing.

Participants who fail to complete and submit an ISV forms on time through the Program Portal within 30 days of notification that service verification is required may jeopardize receiving service credit, be recommended for default and have payments stopped. All ISVs must be complete and submitted in order to be eligible for a one-year extension. Any participant who cannot complete the form through the Program Portal should contact the NURSE Corps LRP immediately through the Program Portal, phone (1-800-221-9393), or email (GetHelp@hrsa.gov).

Please note: Advanced practice registered nurses (NPs, CRNAs, CNMs, CNSs) employed by a professional group should have the service verification form filled out by the administrator of the critical shortage facility, not by the professional group.

CHANGING JOBS

What steps do I need to take if I want to transfer to a different Critical Shortage Facility or accredited school of nursing prior to completing my service?

NURSE Corps LRP expects that a participant will fulfill his or her obligation at the initial CSF or accredited school of nursing; however, NURSE Corps LRP understands that circumstances may arise resulting in a participant's need to leave the initial facility or accredited school of nursing and complete service at another approved site. If a participant feels he or she can no longer continue working at the facility or accredited school of nursing, the participant should contact the NURSE Corps LRP immediately through the Program Portal, phone (1-800-221-9393), or email (GetHelp@hrsa.gov). If the participant leaves his/her service site without prior approval of the NURSE Corps LRP, he/she may be placed in default.

How do I request a transfer to another facility or accredited school of nursing?

If a participant needs to transfer to another site, the participant must request a transfer through the Program Portal. The request will include: (a) the reason for the transfer; (b) documentation from the prospective site verifying that the site is an eligible critical shortage facility or accredited school of nursing. Please note that if the facility or accredited school of nursing is private for-profit, the transfer request will not be approved.

Participants will receive an official decision in writing from the NURSE Corps LRP regarding the approval or denial of a transfer request through the Program Portal. Leaving the approved service site without prior NURSE Corps LRP approval will result in immediate suspension of payments until the NURSE Corps LRP: (a) receives a request to transfer from the participant through the Program Portal and (b) approves the participant's transfer request.

The following are additional requirements for transfer requests:

- (1) Participants who sign a contract to serve as an RN at a CSF are required to transfer to another CSF that falls in the same funding preference tier that they were initially awarded in, or higher. For example, if you currently work at a Critical Access Hospital with a Primary Care HPSA Score of 14 (Tier 1), you must transfer to a facility in Tier 1 with a HPSA score of 14 and above.
- (2) Participants who sign a contract to serve as nurse faculty at an accredited school of nursing must transfer to another eligible accredited school of nursing.
- (3) If there is a less than a 30-day break in service between the initial site and the approved transfer site, the NURSE Corps LRP payments will not be interrupted. However, if the participant fails to resume service within 30 days of the stop-work date at the prior facility or accredited school of nursing, the NURSE Corps LRP will stop all loan repayments. Once the participant begins full-time service at another approved CSF or accredited school of nursing, the service end date will be extended accordingly and loan repayments will resume;
- (4) If a participant is pending transfer, ceases full-time employment at the initial site, and does not resume service at an eligible approved facility or school of nursing within 60 days, the participant will be considered in breach of their contract and may be recommended for default.

BREACHING THE CONTRACT

What if I breach my NURSE Corps LRP contract?

The NURSE Corps LRP encourages participants to immediately contact the NURSE Corps LRP if a situation arises in which a participant is potentially unable to fulfill his/her service obligation. A participant who enters into a one-year continuation contract but fails to begin or complete his/her obligation is liable to repay all the NURSE Corps LRP payments received for the third year of service (including amounts withheld for Federal taxes), plus interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of the participant's breach. Breach of contract will permanently disqualify the individual from receiving future awards under the NURSE Corps LRP and some other Federal programs.

Any indebtedness owed to the Federal government is due within three years of the participant's breach. The debt amount will be subject to interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of breach until paid in full. Other charges and penalties for delinquent or past due debts may be assessed.

SUSPENSION & WAIVER

What should I do if I feel I cannot continue my service or payment obligation?

The Secretary of Health and Human Services may, under certain circumstances, suspend (put on “hold”) or waive (excuse) the NURSE Corps LRP service or payment obligation. A request for a suspension or waiver must be submitted through the Program Portal. Additional supporting documentation will be required following submission of the request.

- (1) **Suspension.** This mechanism provides temporary relief to a NURSE Corps LRP participant if he/she has short-term (not permanent) circumstances that currently make compliance with the obligation impossible or would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant’s NURSE Corps LRP service obligation end date. If the total time away from the site, including the period of suspension, exceeds 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year (see Service Requirements on page 8), the service obligation end date will be extended accordingly. The major categories of service suspensions are set forth below.
 - a. **Medical or Personal Reasons** – A suspension may be granted for up to one year, if the participant provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability, or personal circumstances, including a terminal illness of an immediate family member, which results in the participant’s temporary inability to perform the NURSE Corps LRP obligation. Upon receipt of the suspension request, the NURSE Corps LRP will notify the participant of instructions for submitting supporting documentation.
 - b. **Parental (Maternity/Paternity/Adoption) Leave** –Participants must notify the NURSE Corps LRP of pending parental leave and provide appropriate documentation. Parental leave of 12 weeks or less will be automatically approved, if properly documented. If the participant’s parental leave will exceed 12 weeks during that service year, a suspension may be granted by the NURSE Corps LRP based on documented medical need or if additional parental leave time is permitted under State law.
 - c. **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces** – Participants who are also military reservists and are called to active duty will be granted a suspension, for up to one year, beginning on the activation date described in the reservist’s call to active duty order. In addition to the written request for a suspension, a copy of the order to active duty must be submitted to NURSE Corps LRP. The suspension will be extended if the applicable Armed Forces entity continues the period of active duty. The period of active military duty will not be credited toward the NURSE Corps LRP service obligation.
- (2) **Waiver.** A waiver permanently relieves the participant of all or part of the NURSE Corps LRP obligation. A waiver will be granted only if the participant demonstrates that compliance with his/her obligation (a) is permanently impossible or (b) would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. A request must be submitted in writing to the NURSE Corps LRP and must specify the reason(s) the waiver is being sought. The participant will be contacted directly by the NURSE Corps LRP regarding the medical and financial documentation necessary to process the waiver request. Please note that waivers are not routinely granted and require a demonstration of compelling circumstances.

When would my service obligation be cancelled?

A participant’s obligation will be cancelled only in the unfortunate event of death. No liability will be transferred to the participant’s heirs.

Apply Now

TIPS & IMPORTANT DATES

What should I do before I apply?

Please read the *Application and Program Guidance* in its entirety before proceeding with an application. It explains the contractual obligations of the Secretary of Health and Human Services and NURSE Corps LRP participants. Please understand that a Continuation Award is an obligation to serve full-time for 1 year at a Critical Shortage Facility or accredited school of nursing; and that there are financial consequences for defaulting on the service obligation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to print and retain a copy of this *Application and Program Guidance* for future reference.

When is the application deadline?

All application materials described below must be uploaded to the Program Portal at <https://programportal.hrsa.gov> by September 12, 2013.

What materials will I need when I apply?

To apply for a NURSE Corps LRP continuation contract, you must submit a complete application package consisting of:

- (1) **NURSE Corps LRP FY 2014 Continuation Contract.** This contract is not effective until it has been countersigned by the Secretary's designee, until the participant's initial NURSE Corps LRP 2-year service obligation is fulfilled, and unless the participant has applied all loan repayments received under the initial contract to his or her qualifying educational loan balances prior to completion of service under that contract.
- (2) **Authorization to Release Information Form.** This form authorizes the Department of Health and Human Services and/or its contractors to release required information, as needed, to verify eligibility to participate in NURSE Corps LRP, including determining whether previous NURSE Corps LRP payments have been used to pay qualifying nursing educational loans. This form is available on page 16 and must be uploaded to the Program Portal.
- (3) **Payment History for Qualifying Nursing Educational Loans.** All continuation contract applicants must submit a payment history, which indicates that all payments received under their initial NURSE Corps LRP contract have been applied to reduce their qualifying nursing educational loan debt. Payment histories should be requested from the lender/holder immediately to ensure that they are received in time for submitting a continuation contract application. To expedite the process, many lenders make payment histories available online. The payment history must include:
 - i. the lender's/holder's name;
 - ii. the account holder's name; and
 - iii. the account number.

Payment history can be obtained from your lender(s)/holder(s) and should reflect all payments made since your service start date under your initial contract. All documents must be uploaded and submitted with your application via the Program Portal.

NOTE: When uploading documents to your online application, please ensure that the documents do not exceed 5MB. Multi-page documents can be uploaded; however, documents with more than one page should be consolidated by scanning, saving into one document, and then uploading.. Also, when inputting numbers and dates, please do not use any special characters such as commas (,), dollar signs (\$), spaces (), or dashes (-) as this will cause an error in the system.

All decisions regarding FY 2014 continuation contract applications will be made no later than September 30th, 2014. Please note that if you receive a continuation contract, it will not be effective until you have completed the 2-year service commitment under your initial NURSE Corps LRP contract, and unless you have applied all NURSE Corps LRP payments received under your initial two-year contract to reduce your original qualifying educational loan balances, prior to the completion of service under your initial contract.

NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program

Fiscal Year 2014 Form

To apply for a NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program continuation contract, you must submit your application materials via <https://programportal.hrsa.gov>. Faxes will not be accepted.

For Questions, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910), Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) 8:00am to 8:00 pm EST, or email GetHelp@hrsa.gov.

OMB No. 0915-0140 Expiration 04/30/2014

Public Burden Statement

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The information is being collected and will be used to evaluate an applicant's eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for participating in the NURSE Corps LRP. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 6 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Disclosure of information sought is voluntary; however, if not submitted, except for questions related to Race/Ethnicity on the online application, an application will be considered incomplete and therefore will not be considered for an award. The information applicants supply will be maintained in a system of records and subject to disclosure under the Privacy Act Notification Statement in the NURSE Corps LRP Application and Program Guidance. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 11A-33, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

NURSE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (NURSE CORPS LRP)
AUTHORIZATION to RELEASE INFORMATION

As a NURSE Corps Loan Repayment (NURSE Corps LRP) applicant, I _____,
hereby authorize: (print full name)

- i. The HHS, and/or its contractors, to release the following information to the lenders/holders of my educational loans in order to determine my eligibility/qualifications to participate in the NURSE Corps LRP, and to determine the eligibility of my educational loans for repayment under the NURSE Corps LRP: my name, address(es), social security number, account number(s), account status, and other information necessary to identify me.
- ii. Any program or entity to which I owe a service obligation, or defaulted on a service obligation, to release information relating to that obligation to HHS and/or its contractors.

This authorization will take effect on the date that I sign this release form. If I become a participant in the NURSE Corps LRP, this authorization shall remain in effect until the date my NURSE Corps LRP obligation, including any extension of the obligation pursuant to a continuation contract has been fulfilled or this authorization is revoked by me in writing. If I do not become a participant in the NURSE Corps LRP, this authorization shall remain in effect until September 30, 2014.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Authorization to Release Information Form

This form authorizes HHS, and/or its contractors, to release information that identifies the applicant for purposes of obtaining the applicant's educational loan information. It also authorizes any program to which the applicant owes a health professions service obligation to release information to HHS and/or its contractors.